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V I S I B L E   L A N

**Abstract**

*It is often said that Fluxus exerts profound influence on contemporary artists. This essay argues that Fluxus has done much more than this. This article argues that Fluxus has, in fact, established the general frame of contemporary art. Fluxus did this by reshaping the paradigm within which art is made in Thomas Kuhn's sense of the term paradigm. Rather than exerting a visible influence on artists, Fluxus forms the invisible background to much contemporary art. As a result, young artists are generally unaware of Fluxus and its achievements even though they create works that are strongly inspired by it. This article points to similarities and differences between the era in which Fluxus was born and the current moment. It examines the relationship of art and artist to audience, the mingling of art and life, cultural institutions and economic structures as key concepts in Fluxus work.*

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*"Being, acting and making are much more useful concepts. Art is a process. At the limit, everything is art... I imagine that the art of the future will always be moving, never arrived, the art of being lost without losing oneself."*

ROBERT FILLIOU

*"The entire subject of modes of meeting and the invention of relationships represents esthetic objects that deserve being studied as such."*

NICOLAS BOURRIAUD

## Reference or paradigm for young contemporary artists?

IN HIS BOOK *ESTHÉTIQUE RELATIONNELLE*, the influential french art critic Nicolas Bourriaud emphasizes the

significant originality of contemporary works that question the relations between the artist and the public. Bourriaud effectively admits—even as he denies it—that these kinds of work evoke the convivial works of Fluxus. (Think, for example, about Alison Knowles's proposition: "make a salad.") But Bourriaud immediately adds "(we) must interpret those productions ... without hiding behind the history of art of the sixties."<sup>1</sup> While this is a

<sup>1</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, 1998. *Esthétique Relationnelle*, Les Presses du Réel, p.7.

courageous attempt to define a new art that we must accept, we must also recognize the similarities between the art works of two periods. While it is impossible to apply the ideas of one era to another as a strict analytical grid, the works of Fluxus and the works of the artists gathered by Bourriaud demonstrate more than incidental resemblance.

The first Fluxus concerts of the years 1962–1964 separated the artists and the audience in concerts that played against classic concert rituals to emphasize the artistic rejection of the boundaries implicit in traditional music. Performers wore formal concert dress, the artists performed on stage separated from their audience, many works used classic musical instruments, and so on. At the same time, another tradition was central to Fluxus practice, and the artists sought closer interaction between performers, works and audience in a more intimate practice of performances played within the “group.” In these performances, artists and audience constituted two homothetic sets. This tradition has always coexisted with the tradition of the great public performances. Both traditions were central to the proto-Fluxus era of 1959–1961 in New York. The public activities of the New York Audio-Visual Group represented the classical side of the performance tradition. The private evenings of performances organized by La Monte Young in Yoko Ono’s loft on Chamber Street represented the other.

Fluxus activities in the later 1960s and the early 1970s abolished this clear distinction in a flow of activities that brought artist and audience together as a homogeneous entity. In the meantime, Fluxus group members created a comprehensive body of works and theories on the practice of events and performance art in general. They transmitted their ideas in the numerous publications of Fluxus, *Dé/coll-age*, *Something Else Press* and others, spreading these ideas widely. This corpus dealt with such questions as ontology of the artwork, immaterial practices and indeterminacy. This perspective clearly reveals a comprehension of the work of art as essentially transactional, demonstrating the position of a clearly relational esthetic.

Such concepts as “concept art” (Henry Flynt, 1961), “meaningless art” (Walter de Maria, 1960), “veramusement” (Henry Flynt, 1963), “intermedia” (Dick Higgins, 1966), “event” (George Brecht, 1959) and “art as organized leisure” (Robert Filliou, 1968) are fundamental concepts for the major part of Fluxus works. All these concepts deal with relational practices. Moreover, many Fluxus projects of the 1960s and 1970s share strong ties with Bourriaud’s definition of “relational esthetics.” These include the Fluxfests and Fluxconcerts, Flux Snow Event and others in the 1960s, together with such major projects as the Fluxdivorce, Fluxwedding, Fluxmass and Fluxmeals in the 1970s. Some projects such as the Fluxfests, Fluxconcerts or the Fluxmass involved large public audiences. Others involved smaller circles of Fluxus artists and the larger group that Maciunas labeled “Fluxfriends.” From the later 1960s, these



events grew to become an important part of group activities until George Maciunas's death in 1978.

However, these works are often different from similar events produced today. Despite a similar problematic, they are different not least because of their different reception. They often took place at the fringe of the art world. Even when they had huge audiences, the fact that they took place outside art venues placed them outside the context of art. In many senses, they were provocative, and they were sometimes private to Fluxus, or at least to the small circle of people in and around Fluxus. In contrast, today's relational works are visible to a large art public, consensual and institutional within the art world. Moreover, this distinct frame can't be explained by the idea of the spectacle or the prompt acceptance and use by radical criticism. Neither can it be explained by a hypothetical acceptance of contemporary art as new academism. Recent provocative outbursts in France, or the regular criticism of art exhibitions by public authorities—for example, the Sensation show at the Brooklyn Art Museum—clearly show the contrary.

The gap between the two eras is due to two ontologically distinct conceptions of the function of the work of art. In the 1960s, the exploration of conviviality was seen as an act of possible cultural regeneration. At the time, this vision extended to a larger culture, including the culture outside of the world of art. Today, the work is the place of conviviality itself. It uses the context it questions—mostly institutional—without trying to modify, change or disturb it in any way.

This inscription within such a context denies the need for transformation. The aim is no longer to generate a new lived experience, or to modify our perception in which the artist proposed the work as an alternative project to reality. Mingling art and life in the 1960s and 1970s came down to proposing a utopian realism. In contrast, the aim of today's relational work involves opening an exchange space, within a closed artistic world “and often given by cultural institutions, a space of encounter, of leisure even, not that different from the organized leisure of spectacular capitalism.”

In Guy Debord's analysis, “whereas in the primitive moment of the capitalistic accumulations ‘the politic economy sees only the proletarian in the worker’ ... without ever considering him in ‘his leisure, his humanity,’ this position ... is overturned as soon as the degree of abundance reached by the production of goods asks for an increscent collaboration of the worker. ... Immediately cleansed of the absolute contempt clearly showed by all the modalities of organization and surveillance of the production, [he] is everyday treated ... with a polite zeal under the mask of the consumer. Then the ‘humanism of merchandise’ takes over ‘the leisure and the humanity’ of the worker, simply because the political economy can and must now dominate

2 Debord, Guy. 1967.  
*La Société du spectacle*. Paris:  
 Buchet-Chastel.

those spheres as political economy. Thus, the absolute denial of the human being has taken over the whole human existence."<sup>2</sup>

The work of art, in the great tradition of the Realism, is a fiction of reality. While it is quite didactic, it is strictly distinguished from the real. At last, it becomes more an art of conversation than an art of debate. It is better understood as a representation—in all the meanings of the term, even theatrical—than a critique. From the utopia of expanding the field of art that characterized the art of the 1960s, we pass to a utopia of proximity. On the scale of aleatoric and ephemeral communities, this is strongly homogeneous in sociological terms.

The question of utopia is important in this matter. It forms the point of symmetry where Fluxus encounters its mirrored reflection in today's art—or at least in the productions we consider here. Fluxus has always built the spaces where its social and esthetic utopia could exist beyond the occasional use of existing structures for festivals such as the Städtische Museum for the Wiesbaden concerts, the American Center in Paris or Carnegie Recital Hall for the New York Fluxconcerts. These spaces included Yoko Ono's loft on Chamber Street where the chamber series took place, George Maciunas's AG Gallery for the Musica Antica & Nova, and his studio after he returned to New York. These also included the Cedilla of George Brecht and Robert Filliou in Villefranche sur Mer, Ben Vautier's Shop of Ben Vautier in Nice, the Fluxus West centers in San Francisco and San Diego or Jean Dupuy's Grommet Gallery in George Maciunas's last loft space, later to be the site of the Emily Harvey Gallery. Fluxus people created all these spaces.

The will to realize the practical social settling of an artistic utopia—and the artistic settling of a social utopia—climaxed with the Fluxhouse Cooperative Inc. of George Maciunas and Bob Watts. This was a key factor in the rehabilitation of Soho, and its mutation into an artistic area of New York City.<sup>3</sup> One can describe this as an American pattern of free enterprise, and George Maciunas was often attacked for his real estate operations. It is more accurate to describe this pattern as a collective and individual pattern assumed and used by Fluxus and its "members." from Dick Higgins's creation of Something Else Press, to the well known multiples published under the rubric of Fluxus Editions, the business firm is one of the operative models of Fluxus activity.

Beyond this, the model of the firm also offered Fluxus one of its main possibilities for existence. As Fluxus and Fluxus people mostly worked outside the framework of art institutions, grants, or public support, Fluxus was compelled to raise funds to remain active and independent. At the same time, one must admit that this canonical behavior was essentially predicated on the incredible energy of George Maciunas. In other terms, all this involved using, or even playing off, the capitalistic system to produce objects or actions necessary to its subversion.

3 Williams, Emmett. 1997.  
 "Don Quixote in Soho." In  
*Mr. Fluxus: a collective portrait*  
 of George Maciunas, London:  
 Thames and Hudson, p. 167.

The politically radical orientation seen in much Fluxus activity was mainly due to the influence of Henry Flynt on George Maciunas. It never extended to the other artists, and it reached an early limit when Maciunas attempted to involve the other artists in "direct actions," an approach to public engagement that they refused. This led to the first great crisis of the group. In Fluxus Policy Newsletter n°6 of 1963, Maciunas proposed a series of sabotage actions. Most of the artists reacted against these proposals. Their strong reactions led to a series of breaks within Fluxus and to Maciunas's proposals of expulsions from it. Similarly, Maciunas and Flynt decided to picket Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Originale* during Charlotte Moorman's 1965 Festival of the Avant-Garde, and Maciunas forbid any Fluxus member from performing in it. Apart from the general fiasco surrounding the event, this led to Maciunas's attempt to exclude many artists from Fluxus. Most of the artists paid no attention to the edicts of expulsion, and they continued to see themselves as active in Fluxus, working with one another as if nothing at all had happened.

The firm as a larger model for Fluxus activities goes beyond the attempt to parody capitalism, however. The Cedilla was a case in point. La Cédille Qui Sourit was a kind of shop, together with a studio, a school, a mail art publishing firm and more created by Robert Filliou and George Brecht in Villefranche sur Mer, a small town near Nice in the south-east of France. Alas, The Cedilla, didn't last long, but the artists related their experience, projects and the good time they had in a book published by Something Else Press in 1967 titled *Games at the Cedilla or the Cedilla Takes Off*.

We can easily trail the influence of the firm model on the art of the last decennia. The increasing amount of artistic firms from Fabrice Hybert to Ready Mades Belong to Everyone, and social forms of work are obvious indicators of this phenomenon. Even if the models are still operative, however, they are again significantly different today than they were in the 1960s.

Artistic firms are no longer a means, nor even a pretext, to experiment with the idea of creating alternative organizations with different kinds of goals. They are, instead, a representation of real business, and they operate under the same modes by adapting similar values: producing value, offering service and developing working tools. On the other hand, as the real firms offer more and more conviviality to their employees, the distinction has begun to vanish. It is no surprise that artistic work mirror this convivial function. They simulate the entrepreneurial functioning by its representation, offering virtual services while creating real surplus value. In this way, they disclose the nature of the entire operation as simulacra. As a representation, and as a realistic one, artistic firms establish a relation to mimesis that sets them close to genre painting, turning the object of the representation into an esthetic issue rather than into a social stake.

4 Maciunas, George. 1964.  
*Letter to Thomas Schmit*, January.  
 Detroit: Silverman Collection.

In terms of social ground, the actions and practices of contemporary artists are also informed by the ideas and practices of Fluxus that attempted to act in and on the world. Fluxus often attempted to act in the world. Consider, for example, Maciunas's argument that "Fluxus objectives are social (not aesthetic). They are connected to the LEF group of 1929 in the Soviet Union (ideologically) and concerned with gradual elimination of the fine art ... motivated by the desire to stop the waste of materials and human resources and divert it to socially constructive ends."<sup>4</sup> In other ways, not always political, but often social, so did other Fluxus artists from Joseph Beuys and Nam June Paik to Robert Filliou, Ken Friedman, Bengt af Klintberg and Milan Knizak. This is also true of many artists today.

By taking account of the hopes, rules, conflicts and comprehension of those who use the places they invest with art, social based works try to involve art in a larger and real society beyond what sometimes seem to be the limits of the art world. The problem today is that attempts to restore the social tissue with artworks often appears to be a working method that answers an institutional command, rather than a spontaneous initiative by artists who are personally concerned with intervening in the world.

5 More details on those practices in the essay of Hal Foster "L'artists comme ethnographe, ou la 'fin de l'histoire.'" Paris: Editions du Centre Georges Pompidou, p. 4.

We cannot doubt the operational value of those works. This is all the more true when they are the consequence of serious and appreciable analytic work.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, it is important to realize that the origin of the work has been displaced from the individual artist to cultural, political or associative institutions. It is also important to recognize how, in this way, the arena of the work has been reduced from the universal plane to the local level.

Thus, a paradox emerges. On the one hand, the global village that Marshall McLuhan predicted has become a reality. On the other, the action field of artists has been reduced to the dimension of microcosm. Hal Foster summarizes this dimension under the term of "the paradigm of the ethnographer." Contemporary art now explores issues horizontally, under the mode of the cartography. This is a contrast with art that explores issues vertically, in the traditional shape of narration and historicity. Foster underlines the fact that this relation to local and everyday life is based upon a representation. "Dead as culture, the local and the daily can be resuscitated as simulacra, becoming a 'theme' for an amusement park, or a 'history' for a shopping center, and the 'in situ' process can be engrossed in this zombification of the local and the quotidian, by this Disney version of the in situ."<sup>6</sup>

6 Foster Hal, "L'artists comme ethnographe..." pp. 503-504.

7 See the analysis of feedback in automation in Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media*, chapter 33.

For myself, I would broaden this notion of horizontality to cover all the modalities of contemporary creation. This is what makes them artworks of the era of the global village, the network, electric speed and its consequence, the electronic. The "instantaneity" that McLuhan conceptualized by electric information shapes a horizontal vision of the world and replaces temporality with spatiality.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, historical verticality no longer interferes with the



concept of the artwork, aiding a generalized appropriation of images that are the eternal limbs of a continuous present. However, if the temporality of the work is abolished, its inscription into a microcosm does not affect its scope. It renounces the universal, preferring the general, as a concretion of similar spaces that bear the same method to underline their remaining particularities.

Thus, the internationalist, cosmopolitan, anti-capitalist and trans-disciplinarian utopia of Fluxus, saw its realization into a general topology of the spectacular society. I use the term "realization" here in the Hegelian, speculative tense, to say that today's artwork dialectically realizes the project of Fluxus. But it does so in a specific way, in its prophetic understanding. Fluxus contained and announced this topographical vision of the artwork. The verticality of historicity is surely present in Fluxus, as it is in every avant-garde and neo-avant-garde group, to the degree that it comes under the procedures of self-legitimation that Peter Burger describes.<sup>8</sup> If the references to Dada, Futurism, Satie or Russolo shown in Maciunas's various charts,<sup>9</sup> or the American edition of Huelsenbeck's *Dada Almanac* published by Dick Higgins,<sup>10</sup> are assumed to represent the Fluxus artists in some way, they do not presuppose any affiliations, nor a vassalage of the Fluxus works to those of their elders. On the contrary, the attempts of Raoul Hausmann or Ionesco to contest the Fluxus works are challenged by the fact that Fluxus artists repeatedly refused the designation of Neo-Dada. (Moreover, for many, the label "neo-Dada" defined another group of artists, the American painters gathered around Robert Rauschenberg).<sup>11</sup>

One basic postulate of Fluxus involved refusing professionalism in art. This supposes a horizontal function, and members of the group come from different horizons, particularly from fields outside the art world. While Fluxus included artists, musicians, poets and performers, it was also a forum for people who began as chemists, economists, record salesmen, encyclopedia salesmen, printers, industrial designers, theologians, and more. This wide attitude was reinforced by a refusal to privilege Europe, a factor<sup>12</sup> that allowed American, Japanese, Korean Lithuanian, Czech, Danish, French or English artists to work together on equal terms. They worked without placing value on national origin, all the more as they were strongly influenced by the teaching of John Cage, and through him, by the Buddhist spirituality that contradicts the occidental vision of a vertical conception of the transcendence. Last, these artists from around the world were profoundly curious. They explored both the tools offered by new technologies, and their consequences, particularly the new social and behavioral models they implied.<sup>13</sup> Well-known examples of this include Nam June Paik's very early use of video and his high level electronic research, the television works of Wolf Vostell, the use of computers in art by Joe Jones, Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles.

8 Bürger, Peter. 1974. *Theorie der Avant-Garde*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.

9 Fluxus (its historical development and relationship to avant-garde movements), Fluxus editions, ca 1965, and *Diagram of historical development of Fluxus/and other 4 dimensional aural, optic/factory, epithelial ad tactile art forms (incomplete)*, published by Maciunas, 1973.

10 Huelsenbeck, Richard. 1966. *Dada Almanach*, New York: Something Else Press.

11 The counter example of this assertion is of course the festival Neo-Dada in Der Musik of the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1962, at the Kammermusikspiele of Düsseldorf, where almost all the future founders of the group were present.

12 See Maciunas's *Fluxus Manifesto* of February 1963. It should be noted, however, that none of the other artists signed the manifesto.

13 See, for example, Dick Higgins's *Computers for the Arts*, published in 1970 by Abyss Publications of Somerville, Massachusetts, or Paik's 1976 study for the Ford Foundation titled *Media Planning for the Post-Industrial Society*. More recently, see Ken Friedman's technology studies funded by the European Union, such as *Multiple Views on Multimedia and the World Wide Web: A European Perspective for the INFO2000 Project* or "Cities in the Information Age" in Magid Igbaria and Margaret Tan's 1998 book, *The Virtual Workplace* from Idea Group Publishing of Hershey, Pennsylvania.

The consequence of those founding concepts is the wide-open work that Fluxus achieved within a world-scaled networking structure. The best illustration of this achievement remains the abundant use of correspondence. One example is Mail Art, almost invented by Fluxus people, but it also included the exchange of projects, an internal newsletter, newspapers, sending materials, tracts, posters, multiple editions and, naturally, a form of private correspondence that was most often half-private since it was often circulated to the other artists.

Moreover, Fluxus artists were perfectly aware of the revolutionary character of their networking practice, and they understood it as an adaptation to the electric speed of an electronic era. As attentive readers and admirers of McLuhan, the frequent use of the term “network” in their writings and works shows that this choice doesn’t simply emerge from the preceding postulates. It informs them, constituting them as a theoretical basis for Fluxus work. (McLuhan frequently received homage in the artworks of Fluxus people. He was himself a friend and correspondence of such Fluxus artists as Higgins, Paik, and others.)<sup>14</sup> The paradigm of the network is visible in Robert Filliou’s rubric of *The Eternal Network*, La Monte Young’s *Dream Houses*, Ray Johnson’s *New York Correspondence School*, Robert Watt’s Fluxus postage stamps, Nam June Paik’s project of a satellite television and more.

In 1972, Ken Friedman stated in *The Aesthetics*: “The intermedialist is one who works with and through many forms in the exploration of the relationship and prophetic expression. Where is consistency? In the devotion to relationship as a basic concern of intermedial art ... The new work has the intermedial consistency of relationship, to itself, to the interlocked network of searches and parallels, to the elements of the world about.”<sup>15</sup> This understanding of the artwork as horizontal and interdisciplinary is based on a few antithetic pairs that entitle Fluxus to function in an organic way, beyond the diversity of the individual choices and practices. Basing works upon time as Events do, emphasizing the limits of the bearable as Tomas Schmit’s *Zyklus* does, the structure of the group is widely spread in space. Functioning in a dialectical relationship against necessary historical reference, we see a dialectic of ephemeral works operating within their performing duration of the present. Against the perspectivist hierarchy of history, stands Filliou’s principle of equivalence, inscribing creation into a permanent—and therefore non historical—eternal experimentation network. Last, there is the problem of value, a problematic that could bring the return of verticality were it not refuted by Ben Vautier’s understanding of *Art Total*. This is the other side of a coin declaring the death of art on its face. If anything is art, everything is art. Esthetic value is no longer in the work, but in the eye—and mind—of the viewer. The artist himself is an individual who acts at the same level as other human beings without pretending to a superior point of view. In this way, he

<sup>14</sup> For example, Robert Watts multiple published by Implosion Editions *McLuhan Sweatshirt* in 1967/1968 (Silverman collection no 516, Detroit, USA), or *McLuhan’s face in electronic variation* (1968) by Nam June Paik, a video representing McLuhan’s face distorted by an electromagnetic field, accompanied by the following text:

Mc Snob said, “Wind is moving the flag”

Mc Butterfly said “Flag is moving the wind

Mc Luhan said, “Your Mind is moving”.

(in catalogue Nam June Paik *Electronic Art II*, Bonino Gallery, New York 17<sup>th</sup> of April/11<sup>th</sup> of May 1968)

<sup>15</sup> Friedman, Ken. 1972. *The Aesthetics*. Cullompton, Devon, UK:Beau Geste Press, pp. 6-7, “Some investigations, part I.”

embodies esthetic value. In contrast with a vertical view, this is an attempt to reach a discerning ability, an accurate view of the present.

The Fluxus territory I sketch here may evoke one or another of the contemporary works by young artists. However, the reputation of Fluxus remains relatively invisible, certainly in France and to a great degree elsewhere. Information on Fluxus is sometimes confidential, often partial and fragmentary. This makes it difficult to locate or to learn about the works and original writings. Even worse, the cartoon version of Fluxus published by many art historians denies the real influence of Fluxus on recent art. In this caricature, Fluxus is often reduced to a neo-Dadaist movement whose goal was provocation and humor rather than a phenomenon that used humor and provocation as tools in the service of higher goals. Fluxus remains a sadly mistreated phenomenon in contemporary art history, forgotten entirely in books that vulgarize history as the flow of trends, considered elsewhere as a label for everything that doesn't fit categories. On still other occasions, it is annexed to the Pop art, and so on.

As it is, most young artists don't acknowledge their debt to Fluxus. In fact, many don't even know about it. Even though their work strongly evokes the experimentations of the 1960s, this evocation is rarely the result of appropriation or even citation. How can we explain the formal proximity of their work to Fluxus if post-modern strategies are not involved?

Fluxus appears to be an unwilling or unconscious reference point for contemporary artists. Even though Fluxus remains invisible, it remains a reference point because they are creating their work within the frame that Fluxus prophesied at the end of the 1960s. Even so, the pragmatism underlined by the notion of "artist as ethnographer" and the fiction of "artistic firms" distinguishes current practices from those of the 1960s. This attitude is also an adaptation to the world that emerged with the fall of the iron curtain, a world without dialectical negation, more speculator than speculative.

Fluxus was enacted into a strongly politicized world, ideologically bipolar, shaped by the cold war *zeitgeist*. Despite this, Fluxus always attempted to go beyond the bipolar vision of the world. George Maciunas personal history as a Lithuanian refugee whose parents escaped the arrival of the Red Army in Germany didn't prevent his engagement with a radical, even lyrical, leftist ideology through the influence of Henry Flynt. Moreover, some Fluxus artists lived behind the iron curtain. Among these were Milan Knizak, who became president of the Art Academy in Prague after the Velvet Revolution, and later director of the National Gallery. Another was Vytautas Landsbergis, the first president of the Republic of Lithuania after its liberation from Soviet rule.

Artists today live in an apparently unipolar geopolitical situation determined by the worldwide market economy. Facing this situation, local and

the small utopias can give rise to elements of response, or even of resistance. This situation is made possible by the digital revolution and by the globally networked world that ensued. This global network is the capitalist—and sometimes hegemonic—realization of what Fluxus announced on a small scale and in a utopian way.

So it appears that Fluxus works did not inspire today's artists in any direct way. Rather than serving as the tutelary ancestors of contemporary productions, Fluxus works are instead a kind of fading presence that—at their best—remind young artists of something.

This explains the proximity of current work to Fluxus, a proximity that anyone aware of Fluxus productions can see must be explained by something other than conscious historical reference or the appropriation strategies of the post-modern mode.

What I would like to suggest is that Fluxus should be considered as the paradigm of our contemporary art. In this sense, it is a paradigmatic influence in the sense of the term introduced by Thomas Kuhn into the history of science.<sup>16</sup> It is a point of origin that created a new frame of action and conception within which the works are elaborated without the artists even being conscious of this general frame.

The influence of Fluxus process cannot be seen as a reference point in the classical sense of an historical moment endlessly interrogated by later works and artistic productions. (Of course, this type of artwork exists. after all there are also young geometrical abstractionist artists at work, along with artists of every other kind and stripe.) Nevertheless, it is better to envision Fluxus as a Copernican revolution. Fluxus helped to establish a new *weltanschauung*, reinforced by the general transformation of the world in the world created by the globalization of exchange that we live in today.

Fluxus, embedded in its time, appeared in an era of mechanical and historicist paradigms. Despite this fact, the Fluxus artists conceived a program of works to announce the unhistorical and cybernetic paradigm that is central to art and culture today.

It would be useless to comment on all the works of Fluxus artists using new media technologies. Their understanding of this changing era rests, ontologically, upon a more global—and more basic—understanding of the work of art. Beyond this, the most emblematic works of the new situation are not those that use the new technologies in a straightforward way, but those that show the best understanding of the horizontality of the network.

The organization of Fluxus itself is the image of this new paradigm. It has no single head or center. It remains transitive and undefined. It is structured as a network of nodes and tentacles. Therefore, to the question of what comes “after Fluxus,” I would not answer neo-Fluxus or post-Fluxus, but simply Fluxus. While the original Fluxus artists belong to an historical neo-avant-garde,

<sup>16</sup> Kuhn, Thomas S. 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 10.



they do not maintain patriarchal position today. While the individual careers of each artist continue to demonstrate exceptional creativity, the group as a whole remains fluid and still difficult to cast in historical terms.

Instead, the influence of Fluxus is visible as a founding experiment in a horizontal process. It is topographical. As such, it is absolutely timeless.

**Author Note**

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